Monday Reflections

Writing Workshop

Intros—hook the reader

* I feel great about this lesson. I think it had a nice simplicity to it.
* I think that most students understood the objective. Not all students were at this point in their writing process, but for those who were ready to start writing introductions, this lesson provided nice scaffolding.
* I also really appreciated the mentors that the unit included—really great examples.
* One unanticipated point of confusion I saw early on in the minilesson was whether using a strong lead was part of the Introduction Paragraph or the opening to each Main Idea Paragraph. I think I cleared this up, but it surprised me!
* Today was also the last day for using book, printouts, other resources. The rest of the week will be devoted to developing, drafting, revising, and publishing!
* I feel confident that everyone will be able to publish Friday. For some it will require some serious focus in the next few days, but it’s going to happen!

Social Studies

Lucy Terry Prince

* I love the primary document used in this lesson. It’s such a fascinating little piece of the past. I had never thought about how fruitful looking at obituaries could be, both to learn about historical figures lives and to learn about how those lives were memorialized at the time.
* We started the lesson with a recap/brainstorm of what we know about Loyalists and Patriots. I think students are developing a sense of what makes these two groups different and how someone’s beliefs, values, and daily life all intersect.
* As I read over the work completed during this session, however, there were some trouble spots; not all students completed their writing work.
* In the future, I would like to explore how to further support quick-writing assignments like this so that students can transfer their smart observations into clear written responses.

Math

Area of a Triangle

* The work for this lesson was great. The sequence was challenging and really led students toward some strong discoveries.
* However, I think some students shied away from grappling with the figures and instead tried to apply the formula they had previously encountered to these new problems.
* The share was strong and stretched thinking, but felt a bit rushed. Even though we are moving on tomorrow to solids, I want to open with a brief revisiting of area of a triangle. I think some strong thinking started today, but wasn’t quite finished/solidified.
* I also loved seeing students’ thinking as it was recorded on their packets. In cases where students weren’t really making marks on the page, it’s very tricky too see where understanding broke down or grew!

IRA

Response Card

* I think we had a nice conversation recalling the book and the messages therein. All students made a strong start to their cards. Some students may finish them during another time, like during morning work, later in the week to make sure they are ready to be shared with the world.

Reading Workshop

Envisioning

* A great surprise in the connection for this lesson was that two students had awesome, recent examples of using this strategy to decipher tricky words in their own reading! Great!
* Another great moment was having a student use the strategy during workshop, then check her thinking with a dictionary and see that her definition was spot on.
* I think this lesson went well. I loved using the article on art in post-earthquake Haiti. I think it was really beautiful and relevant and of interest for many students.
* One challenge that I encountered as I was planning and that was pretty true in execution was that it was difficult to find a word in an authentic text that was contextualized enough to make envisioning possible *and* was unfamiliar/unknown to most/many students.
  + A surprise was that I chose a sentence for active engagement because it included the word “debris.” It turned out to be a familiar word for many. However, the sentence ends with workers digging through debris to “salvage” works of art. Salvage ended up being much more unfamiliar and more useful to students trying on the strategy!